

Tennessee to Celebrate State Natural Areas Week

MARCH 29 through APRIL 4, 2004

Tennesseans from across the State are encouraged to join together in a weeklong celebration of State Natural Areas Week to be held March 29 – April 4. Natural Areas Week will be celebrated across the state with hikes, canoe floats, and interpretative programming at many of Tennessee's 68 State Natural Areas. These unique lands are preserved in perpetuity under the Natural Areas Preservation Act of 1971 and protect habitat for many species of rare plants and animals.

Natural Areas Week provides the public an opportunity to visit many of the lesser-known state natural areas as well as some of the more popular state parks that are also natural areas. It provides the public an opportunity to experience many of Tennessee's most valued landscapes where ecosystems are intact and our natural heritage is preserved.

Enjoy the week by participating in any number of interesting hikes or activities that are offered. If you have general questions about the week call 615 532-0431, otherwise call the contact number included in the Natural Areas Week schedule. The Tennessee Natural Areas Program is in the Division of Natural Heritage, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC).

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEST TENNESSEE ACTIVITIES

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park and Natural Area: Guided Nature Hike

Location: Meet at the park office

Date: Monday, March 29

Time: 10:00 a.m. CST

Leaders: Samantha Morouney, park interpretive specialist

Sponsor: Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

No reservations required: For more information call 901 876-5215

Description: Take a 1.5 mile hike through a beautiful upland forest blooming with spring wildflowers along the bluffs of the Mississippi River. This hike is through some of West Tennessee's richest forestland.

Ghost River State Natural Area: Canoe float on the "Ghost River" section of the Wolf River

Location: Meet at Yager Road boat ramp, just south of LaGrange

Date: Wednesday, March 31

Time: 10:00 a.m. CST

Leader: Keith Kirkland (WRC), Chad Harden, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsors: Wolf River Conservancy, Natural Areas Program

Reservations required: Please RSVP with the Wolf River Conservancy 901 452-6500

Description: Float the "Ghost River" section of the Wolf River from LaGrange to Bateman Bridge with experienced guides. This section of river has been compared to the delta bayou without the Spanish moss. Participants **MUST** provide their own canoes and equipment. Equipment can be rented from Wolf River Canoe Rental 901 877-3958. Bring lunch, as the trip requires approximately 6 hours to complete.

Carroll Cabin Barrens Natural Area Hike

Location: Meet at the Decatur County Public Library, Decaturville Town Square.

Date: Friday, April 2

Time: 9:30 a.m.CST

Leader: Bart Jones, Tennessee Native Plant Society

No Reservation Required. For more information, call 901-726-6891

Description: Explore one of Tennessee's newest natural areas, home to glades and barrens supporting a plant community with affinities more akin to the prairies of the Great Plains than the glades of the Central Basin.

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park and Natural Area: Deep Swamp Canoe Trip

Location: Meet at the park office

Date: Thursday and Friday, April 1st and 2nd

Time: 10:00 a.m. CST

Leaders: Samantha Morouney, park interpretive specialist

Sponsor: Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

Reservations required: Space is limited, please call the park office 901 876-5215 to reserve your spot.

Description: This is a unique experience canoeing through a pristine bald cypress swamp where you will get close to heron and egret rookeries. This float will take you through great wildland habitat where you may also be able to sight a majestic bald eagle along with other extraordinary wildlife.

Shelby Farms Park – Lucius Burch State Natural Area: Hike

Location: Meet at the soccer field parking lot on the south side of Walnut Grove Road, just east of Wolf River

Date: Saturday April 3rd

Time: 10:00 a.m. CST

Leaders: Larry Smith (SCEIC), Chad Harden, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsor: Shelby County, Natural Areas Program

No reservations required: for additional information call 731 512-1369

Description: Take a hike within one of the largest remaining bottomland hardwood forest tracts within the Memphis metro area. This hike will venture through bald cypress and hardwood forest.

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park and Natural Area: Guided Native Plant Hike through a West Tennessee Forest Ecosystem

Location: Meet at the park office

Date: Saturday, April 3rd

Time: 10:00 a.m. CST

Leader: Glinda Watts

Sponsor: Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

No reservations required: call 901 876-5215 for more information

Description: Specialist Glinda Watts will take you on a fascinating hike on the Woodland Trail. She will identify and describe native plants and wildflowers and the many medicinal

uses they have. The hike should provide an opportunity to view many splendid spring wildflowers.

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park and Natural Area: Guided Native Plant Hike

Location: Meet at the park office

Date: Sunday, April 4

Time: 1:00 p.m. CST

Leader: Glinda Watts

Sponsor: Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

No reservations required: call 901 876-5215 for more information

Description: Specialist Glinda Watts will lead another hike through a field and lake ecosystem, identifying and describing native plants and wildflowers and the many medicinal uses they have. Participants need to be prepared to caravan from the visitor center to the hike location.

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park and Natural Area: Pontoon Boat Trip on Poplar Tree Lake

Location: Meet at the nature center on Poplar Tree Lake

Date: Saturday, April 3rd

Time: 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. CST

Leader: Samantha Morouney, park interpretive specialist

Sponsor: Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

Reservations required: Please call the park office 901 876-5215 to make reservations.

Description: Take a relaxing trip around the 135-acre Poplar Tree Lake. Reservations are required as space is limited. Cost is \$1 per person. Children under 5 are free.

Reelfoot Lake State Park: Naturalist Guided Canoe Float

Location: Reelfoot Lake State Park

Date: Saturday and Sunday, April 3rd and 4th

Time: 8:00 a.m. CST - noon, 1:00 p.m. CST– 5:00

Leader: David Haggard, park naturalist

Sponsor: Reelfoot Lake State Park

Reservations required: Please call 731 253-9652

Description: Take a naturalist guided canoe float into one of the unique areas of Reelfoot Lake. Observe old growth cypress trees, and active bald eagle nests and a wetland ecosystem. Cost is \$20 per boat and reservations are required.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE ACTIVITIES

Couchville Cedar Glade Natural Area: Cedar Glade Hike

Location: Long Hunter State Park Visitor Center

Date: Sunday, March 28th, Wednesday, March 31st

Time: 1:00 p.m. CST

Leaders: John Froeschauer, April Welch, park staff,

Sponsor: Long Hunter State Park

No reservations required: For information, please call 615 885-2422

Description: The cedar glades of Middle Tennessee offer unique assemblages of plants that occur in globally rare ecosystems. Couchville is an exceptional natural area with glades,

barrens, and cedar hardwood forest. Early annual glade flowering plants should be in full bloom.

Couchville Cedar Glade Natural Area: A Walk in the Glades with Tennessee's State Botanist

Location: Long Hunter State Park Visitor Center

Date: March 30th

Time: 10:00 a.m. CST

Leaders: Claude Bailey, Forrest Evans, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsor: Natural Areas Program

Reservations requested: Please call 615 741-9205 or email forrest.evans@state.tn.us

Description: The cedar glades of Middle Tennessee offer unique assemblages of plants that occur in globally rare ecosystems. Couchville is an exceptional natural area with glades, barrens, and cedar hardwood forest. Early annual glade flowering plants should be in full bloom.

Gattinger's Cedar Glade and Barrens Natural Area: A Walk in the Glades with Tennessee's State Botanist

Location: Long Hunter State Park Visitor Center

Date: March 30th

Time: 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. CST

Leaders: Claude Bailey, Forrest Evans, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsor: Natural Areas Program

Reservations requested: Please call 615 741-9205 or email forrest.evans@state.tn.us

Description: This trip will be to a natural area that is owned by the Nashville SuperSpeedway. Because it is privately owned access is restricted to sponsored events. The glade and barrens complex here is pristine and supports one of the states best populations of the federally endangered Tennessee purple coneflower. Come learn about these ecosystems with our state botanist, Claude Bailey.

Barnett's Woods Cave Trip

Location: Meet at The Nature Conservancy office at the old St Barnard Academy building set off of 21st Ave. South on Bernard St. Transportation provided for a limited number of participants.

Date: Thursday April 1st

Time: 9:00 a.m. CST

Leaders: Heather Garland (TNC), Forrest Evans, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsors: The Nature Conservancy of Tennessee, Natural Areas Program

Reservations required: Please call 615 741-9205 or email forrest.evans@state.tn.us

Description: This is a rare opportunity to explore a cave that is not open to the public. In the winter this cave is occasionally home to the endangered Indiana bat. You will need a hard hat and a flashlight. Wildflowers will be in bloom along the trails. Please be prepared for muddy, rough, and wet conditions. Participants should bring water, lunch, sturdy footwear, and dress appropriately for the weather.

Canoe Float on the Duck River State Scenic River adjacent to the Duck River Complex Natural Area

Location: Meet at Radnor Lake State Park Visitor's Center. Transportation for a limited number will be provided by reservation. Cost is \$20 per canoe or \$10 per individual.

Date: Friday April 2nd

Time: 9:00 a.m. CST to approximately 5:00 p.m.

Leader(s): Leslie Colley (TNC), Forrest Evans, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsors: The Nature Conservancy of Tennessee, Natural Areas Program

Reservations required: Please call 615 741-9205 or email forrest.evans@state.tn.us

Description: This is an easy 4-hour float down Tennessee's newest scenic river. This is a wide gentle river with no whitewater. We will be observing the river life and the surrounding bluffs, glades, and open areas along the river. Call for details!

Short Springs and May Prairie State Natural Area Hike

Location: Meet at the Target store parking lot off I-24 on Bell Road. A van will provide transportation for a limited number of participants.

Date: Friday, April 2nd

Time: 8:30 a.m. CST - return 5:00 p.m.

Leader: Brian Bowen, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsor: Natural Areas Program

Reservations required: call 615 532-0436 Brian.Bowen@state.tn.us

Description: This will combine 2 very different experiences; a hike in one of Tennessee's most beautiful spring wildflower locations and a visit to one of Tennessee's most unique tall grass prairies. You will see 2 very different ecosystems that are only 15 miles away. Hiking is easy to moderately difficult. Participants should bring water, lunch, sturdy footwear, and dress appropriately for the weather.

Vesta and Walter Hill Floodplain State Natural Areas and Vicinity: Rare Plant Fieldtrip

Location: Meet at Cedars of Lebanon State Park Office

Date: April 3rd

Time: 10:a.m. CST

Leader: David Lincicome, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsors: Tennessee Native Plant Society, Natural Areas Program

Reservations requested: call 615 532-0431 David.Lincicome@state.tn.us

Description: The morning and early afternoon will be spent in the Cedars of Lebanon Forest and State Park vicinity and will include a visit to Vesta State Natural Area and then a drive south later that afternoon to visit Walter Hill Floodplain State Natural Area, off of US 231 east of Murfreesboro along the East Fork of the Stones River. The focus of the field trip will be to view the federally listed Spring Creek bladderpod and the rare Stones River bladderpod. Attention will also be given to many other early flowering plants. Many other rare and interesting cedar glade plants will be observed during this field trip. Sites will be visited by carpooling.

This fieldtrip requires easy hiking over short distances, however boots are recommended. Spring weather can be variable so dress accordingly. Lunches could be picked up in Lebanon at fast food locations, or pack a lunch, to be enjoyed at Cedars of Lebanon State Park. A reservation is requested, as space is limited. Tennessee Native Plant Society members will have first priority.

Stones River National Battlefield: Privet: An Unwelcome Intruder

Location: Meet at the Visitor's Center, 3501 Old Nashville Highway, Murfreesboro

Date: Saturday, April 3rd

Time: 1:00 a.m. CST

Leader: John McKay, Kyle Hurt, Terri Hogan, National Park Service staff

Sponsor: Stones River National Battlefield

Reservations requested: please call 615 478-1035 or 615 893-9501

Description:

We will be walking along the park's boundary trail through cedar glades and observing the intrusion of non-native privet along the edges of glades and its woody islands. We will discuss how privet affects the woods that border glades and the potential threat that it poses to cedar glades. We will also discuss some of the important plant and animal species that are negatively affected by the presence of this highly aggressive exotic invasive species.

Stones River National Battlefield is a National Park established to preserve and interpret the ground over which the Battle of Stones River raged between December 31, 1862 and January 2, 1863. This battle resulted in the Unions control of an important supply network that ultimately began the Unions "March to the Sea." Stones River supports a high quality cedar glade and barrens complex that include several federally listed endangered species and state listed rare species that are protected under public ownership. It serves as refugia for native species in one of the fastest growing regions in the US.

Cedars of Lebanon, Vesta, and Couchville State Natural Areas: Cedar Glade and Barrens Tour

Location: Meet at Long Hunter State Park to van and carpool to selected sites

Date: Saturday April 3rd

Time: 10:00 a.m. CST

Leader: Forrest Evans, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsor: Natural Areas Program

Reservations required: please call 615 741-9205 or email forrest.evans@state.tn.us

Description: This will be a moderate series of hikes. We will see glades, barrens, hardwood forests and unique geological features. Participants should bring water, lunch, sturdy footwear, and dress appropriately for the weather.

Wildflower Hike at Taylor Hollow State Natural Area

Location: Meet at the home of Dr. Ward on Phillips Hollow Road in northeast Sumner County, call for detailed directions.

Date: Saturday April 3rd

Time: 10:00 a.m. CST to 1:00 p.m.

Leader: Roger McCoy, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsor: Natural Areas Program

Reservations requested: please call 615 741-9205 or email forrest.evans@state.tn.us

Description: Join Tennessee's Natural Heritage Coordinator Roger McCoy on an outstanding wildflower hike to Taylor Hollow, a Tennessee Nature Conservancy owned state natural area. Taylor Hollow is renowned for its spring flora especially the display that the blue-eyed Mary often provides. This is a moderately difficult hike. Participants should bring water, sturdy footwear, and dress appropriately for the weather.

Montgomery Bell State Natural Area: Spring Wildflower Hike

Location: Meet at Montgomery Bell State Park Visitor's Center

Date: Friday April 2nd

Time: TBA

Leader: Claude Bailey, Division of Natural Heritage, Michelle Carpenter Tennessee State Parks

Sponsors: Natural Areas Program, Tennessee State Parks

Reservations requested: please call 615 741-9205 or email forrest.evans@state.tn.us

Description: This is a moderately difficult hike. We will see many spring wildflowers in these rich forests at Montgomery Bell State Natural Area. Participants should bring water, lunch, sturdy footwear, and dress appropriately for the weather.

Burgess Falls State Natural Area: Hike to Burgess Falls

Location: Meet at Long Hunter State Park. Transportation is provided for a limited number of participants.

Date: Sunday April 4th

Time: 1:00 p.m. CST

Leader: Forrest Evans, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsor: Natural Areas Program

Reservations required: Please call 615 741-9205 or email forrest.evans@state.tn.us

Description: Burgess Falls provides both wonderful spring wildflowers and 3 scenic waterfalls for your viewing pleasure. Wear sturdy boots and bring water and a camera for a one- mile round trip hike. Call for details.

Flat Rock Natural Area: Cedar Glade and Barrens Hike

Location: Meet at the Flat Rock Natural Area parking area on Factory Road, 5 miles east of Murfreesboro off of Hall's Hill Pike

Date: Sunday April 4th

Time: 2:00 p.m. CST

Leader: Sally Rollins (The Nature Conservancy)

Sponsor: The Nature Conservancy

Reservations requested: please call 741-9205 or email forrest.evans@state.tn.us

Description: Sally Rollins, ecologist with The Nature Conservancy, will lead a hike to observe the glades and barrens in early spring. Wear sturdy boots and bring water and a camera for a 3-mile round trip hike to see these unique glade ecosystems. This will be an easy hike along relatively flat terrain. Call for details.

Short Springs State Natural Area: Spring Wildflower Walks

Location: Short Springs parking area (under the water tower) on Short Springs Rd. just outside of Tullahoma

Date: Sunday April 4th

Time: 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. CST

Leader: Dennis Horn, Friends of Short Springs

Sponsor: Friends of Short Springs,

Reservations requested: Please call 931 461-0262

Description: Short Springs is perhaps one of the richest wildflower areas in Middle Tennessee. Come enjoy the wildflowers, waterfalls, cascading streams on a short 3-4 mile hike, and gain a greater appreciation of this wonderful Middle Tennessee jewel.

Radnor Lake State Natural Area: Celebrate Natural Areas

Location: Radnor Lake State Natural Area Visitor Center

Date: Sunday March 28th

Time: 2:00 p.m. CST to 5:00 p.m.

Sponsor: Radnor Lake State Natural Area

No reservations required: for information about events, please call - 615 373-3467

Description: Join us for a variety of programs to highlight Tennessee State Natural Areas. Friends of Radnor Lake will host the event with wildflower walks, live wildlife demonstrations, art show, and the presentation of the 4th annual environmental award. All are welcome.

Radnor Lake State Natural Area: Wildflower Hike

Location: Radnor Lake State Natural Area Visitor Center

Date: Friday April 2nd

Time: 1:00 p.m. CST

Leader: Steve Ward, park ranger

Sponsor: Radnor Lake State Natural Area

Reservations required: reservations must be made by Saturday, March 27, please call - 615 373-3467

Description: Join park ranger Steve Ward for a hike along the South Lake and South Cove trails and enjoy Radnor Lakes early spring flora.

Dunbar Cave State Natural Area Spring Fling

Location: Dunbar Cave State Park, Clarksville

Date: April 3rd

Time: 7 a.m. CST till dark

Leader: Park Staff

Sponsor: Friends of Dunbar Cave State Park

Reservations requested: call 931 648-5526

Description: The Friends of Dunbar Cave is sponsoring the 4th Annual Spring Fling on Saturday April 3rd. Activities begin at 7 a.m. with a bird hike. Other hikes and events will take place throughout the day. Additional events will include cave tours and canoeing on the lake. Tours of the cave are offered by reservation and a small fee is charged.

Devil's Backbone State Natural Area Excursion and Guided Hike

Location: Meet at Radnor Lake Visitor Center

Date: Saturday, April 3

Time: 1:00 p.m. CST

Leader: Randy Hedgepath, Tennessee State Parks

Sponsor: Radnor Lake State Natural Area

Reservations required: Reservations must be made by March 27th, call 377-1281

Description: Join a group departing from Radnor Lake to explore a Western Highland Rim state natural area located off the scenic Natchez Trace in Lewis County.

Devil's Backbone State Natural Area: Guided Hike

Location: Meet at the parking lot on the west side of the Natchez Trace Parkway, 3 miles north of Highway 412.

Date: Sunday, April 4th

Time: 2:00 p.m. CST

Leader: Chad Harden, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsor: Natural Areas Program

Reservations required: Please call the Jackson TDEC office at 731 512-1369 to make reservations or email Charles.Harden@state.tn.us

Description: Enjoy a moderate, 3-mile hike across ridges and valleys near the historic Natchez Trace Parkway. The hike will follow a trail through a mature Middle Tennessee oak-hickory forest.

SOUTHEAST TENNESSEE ACTIVITIES**Savage Gulf State Natural Area: Hike to Savage Falls**

Location: Savage Gulf Ranger Station

Date: Sunday March 28th

Time: 1:00 p.m. CST

Leader: Ranger George, park ranger

Sponsor: South Cumberland Recreation Area

No reservations required: call the SCRA office at 931 924-2980 for details

Description: Wear sturdy boots and bring water and a camera for a 4- mile round trip hike to see the wonderful Savage Creek Waterfall. .

Carter Caves State Natural Area: Buggytop in Bloom

Location: Carter Cave State Natural Area parking lot off of Hwy 41 south of Sewanee

Date: Sunday March 28th

Time: 9:00 a.m. CST

Sponsor: South Cumberland State Recreation Area

No reservations required: call the SCRA office at 931 924-2980 for details.

Description: Come catch the first batch of wildflowers as they bring in the spring. From anemone to wake robin, we'll see a bit of everything. The hike is about 4 miles roundtrip and rated moderate.

Virgin Falls Pocket Wilderness State Natural Area: Hike to Virgin Falls

Location: Trailhead for Virgin Falls Pocket Wilderness in Bridgestone/Firestone Centennial Wilderness in White County

Date: Tuesday March 30th

Time: 10:00 a.m. CST

Leader: Jeff Corser, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsor: Natural Areas Program

Reservations required: Please call 423 634-5774 or email Jeffrey.Corser@state.tn.us

Description: This will be a strenuous 10-mile round trip hike into the heart of the Scott's Gulf Centennial Wilderness to the spectacular Virgin Falls. An underground stream emerges from a cave, drops 110 feet and disappears into Virgin Cave. Along the way we'll also see Big Laurel Falls, Sheep Cave and a commanding view of the unspoiled Caney Fork River

watershed from Martha's Pretty Point. Participants should bring water, lunch, sturdy footwear, and dress appropriately for the weather.

Fall Creek Falls State Park and Natural Area: 24th Annual Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage

Location: Most of the events start at the Inn Lobby or at the Nature Center

Dates: April 2-4

Time: Activities start at 1:00 p.m. CST and last until 8:00 p.m.

Leaders: Stuart Carroll, et al., park ranger

Sponsor: Fall Creek Falls State Park and Natural Area

Reservations requested: Please call 423 881-5708 for more information

Description: The Spring wildflower pilgrimage includes 3 days of hikes, boat rides and presentations. Not only will the activities focus on the local plants, but also the local animals and the night sky above the Park. Call the Park's Nature Center for details.

Savage Gulf State Natural Area: Hike from Collins West Trail to Horsepound Falls

Location: Meet at Collins West trailhead.

Date: April 3, 10:00 a.m. CST.

Leader: Mary Priestley, TNPS, Brian Bowen, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsors: Tennessee Native Plant Society, Natural Areas Program

No reservations required

Description: This is a 5-mile hike past beautiful Suter Falls and through Collins Gulf, which is known for its spectacular display of spring wildflowers. We will eat lunch at Horsepound Falls. It is a moderately difficult hike because of one creek crossing and several hundred feet of elevation change. Those who prefer not to cross the creek can take the well-marked alternate route to Collins East for a less-stressful walk through similar habitat. Participants should bring lunch, water, sturdy footwear, and dress appropriately for the weather.

Directions: Exit I-24 at Monteagle (exit 134). Trailhead is approx. 35-40 min. from Monteagle. Take Highway 41-A through Monteagle, then left on Highway 41 to Tracy City. (South Cumberland State Recreation Area's Visitors Center, where maps and directions are available, is on the left between Monteagle and Tracy City.) In Tracy City go left at the first traffic light, and follow Highway 56. Go right at next traffic light onto Highway 108. Go left on 55th Avenue. The trailhead is approximately 2 miles down 55th Avenue from Hwy.108.

North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Natural Area: Flipper Bend and Clear Branch Loop-Trail Grand Opening

Location: The grassy field at jct. of Hixson Springs Road at Standing Rock Road on Signal Mountain

Date: Saturday April 3rd

Time: 10:00 a.m. EST

Leaders: Jeffrey Corser, Division of Natural Heritage, Debbie Glasscock (NCCC)

Sponsor: North Chickamauga Creek Conservancy, Natural Areas Program

Reservations requested: Please call 423 634-5774 or email Jeffrey.Corser@state.tn.us or elliott@northchick.org

Description: These will be moderate hikes showcasing a newly completed network of nature trails atop Walden's Ridge on the Flipper Bend portion of the natural area. Two loops of varying lengths will be offered. A 5-mile hike will feature a unique plateau-top vernal pond, replete with breeding amphibians and wetland plants. A longer 8-mile hike will offer spectacular views of the Tennessee Valley and Pocket Wilderness. Wildflowers will be in bloom along both trails. Please be prepared for muddy, rough and wet conditions. Participants should bring water, sturdy footwear, lunch, and dress appropriately for the weather.

Chimneys State Natural Area: View the Chimneys and the Upper Little Sequatchie River Gorge

Location: Chimneys State Natural Area off Pocket Creek Rd. in Marion County

Date: Sunday April 4th

Time: 1:00 p.m. CST

Leader(s): Jeff Corser, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsor: Natural Areas Program

Reservations requested: Please call 423 634-5774 or email Jeffrey.Corser@state.tn.us for more information and directions

Description: These are short, easy hikes in and around the Chimneys State Natural Area. Included will be a 2-mile (round-trip) hike to a spectacular overlook of the upper reaches of the rugged, undeveloped Little Sequatchie River gorge; a side trip into Pocket Creek to view old growth hemlocks, and (if water levels permit) the Chimneys unique rock "window"; and a short quarter mile stroll to view the Chimneys. Call for details!

NORTHEAST TENNESSEE ACTIVITIES

House Mountain State Natural Area: Wildflower and Bird Hike

Location: House Mountain State Natural Area

Date: Sunday, March 28

Time: Hikers will meet at the House Mountain parking area at 8:00 a.m. EST (or 7:30 a.m. EST at the UT Ag Campus parking lot 66 if you want to carpool).

Leaders: David and Allan Trently

Sponsor: The Nature Club, organized by Avian Pursuits Nature Tours

Reservations not required: for more information please call 865 594-5601

Description: To help celebrate Tennessee State Natural Areas Week, our nature club will kick off this event a day early with a hike at House Mountain State Natural Area. There will be a nice diversity of spring wildflowers in bloom, maybe a few early songbird migrants and hopefully ruffed grouse drumming. We will spend the morning identifying and learning about the spring wildflowers while listening for birds.

If you've never been to this park, this is a great opportunity to check out this highest elevation in Knox County. Visit the State's website at:

<http://www.state.tn.us/environment/nh/natareas/housemtn/>

Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area: Off Trail Hike and New Trail Scouting

Location: Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area, Carter County, Tennessee

Date: Monday, March 29 and Tuesday, March 30

Time: 10:00 a.m. EST, meet at the Hampton Creek Cove parking lot

Leaders: Bob Hardin, Overmountain Victory Trail Association

Sponsor: Overmountain Victory Trail Association, Natural Areas Program
Reservations requested: Please call Lisa Huff at 865 594-5601 or email Lisa.Huff@state.tn.us or Bob Hardin at 423-612-0242 rvhardin@charter.net

Description: A new trail is being developed that will link Hampton Creek Cove to the Appalachian Trail. We're calling all volunteers to come and help with the layout of the new trail on March 29th and 30th during State Natural Areas Week.

This new trail will be celebrated as the certified route of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. The Overmountain Men took this trail when they marched from East Tennessee to the Battle of King's Mountain, South Carolina, during the American Revolutionary War. The Battle of King's Mountain was a decisive victory for the American patriots and a turning point in the revolution in favor of our founding fathers and mothers.

After the trail layout is completed, volunteers may want to return later in 2004 to help construct the new hiking trail.

Piney Falls State Natural Area: Wildflower and Scenic View Hike

Location: Piney Falls State Natural Area

Date: Wednesday, March 31

Time: 9:00 a.m. CST meet at the Piney Falls parking area

Leader(s): Lisa Huff, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsors: Natural Areas Program, Tennessee Trails Association, Plateau Chapter, Wednesday hikers

No reservations required

Description: These will be 2, short and easy hikes in and around the Piney Falls State Natural Area. We will hike around the falls loop trail and see recent improvements inside the natural area. After that, we will travel to Shut In Gap and hike up Soak Creek to the confluence of the Little Piney River. This area has spectacular displays of spring wildflowers and the hike will follow Soak Creek the whole way.

Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area: Trail Volunteer Day

Location: Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area, meet at park office

Date: Saturday, April 3

Time: 9:00 a.m. EST (first time volunteers need to meet at 8:00 a.m.)

Leader: Dave Engebretson, park manager

Sponsor: Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area

Reservations required: Please call 423 346-3318 or email David.Engbretson@state.tn.us

Description: Frozen Head has over 50 miles of hiking trails to maintain. Recently the park has been sponsoring very successful volunteer trail days to provide trail maintenance. Come out and join the park and natural area staff to do erosion control work on the Judge Branch trail. We will meet at the Park Visitor Center at 9:00 a.m. and will probably work until 2:30 or 3:00 p.m. All tools will be provided by the park service. We recommend a good pair of work gloves, sturdy hiking boots and bring your lunch and water in a daypack if you have one. First time volunteers need to meet at 8:00 a.m. to fill out the liability waiver and other paperwork. There will be a brief safety meeting if first time volunteers are involved. In case of pouring rain we cancel, light rain we have gone out in the past. Be prepared for the weather that is forecasted. Volunteers should call the park office with any questions. Call the SCRA office 931 924-2980 for details.

Colditz Cove State Natural Area: Leisure Hike

Location: Colditz Cove State Natural Area; meet at parking area. A van will also provide transportation from Knoxville for a limited number of participants.

Date: Sunday, April 4

Time: 2:00 p.m. CST, meet at the parking area.

Leader: Lisa Huff, Division of Natural Heritage

Sponsor: Natural Areas Program

No reservations required. For more information or directions, please call 865 594-5601 or email Lisa.Huff@state.tn.us.

Description: Colditz Cove State Natural Area contains one of the most beautiful waterfalls in Tennessee. Northrup Falls plunges nearly 60 feet into a beautiful pool in the gorge below the top of the falls. The gorge is filled with magnificent old growth hemlock and white pine trees. Lush rhododendron grows along the creek as it cascades through boulders. Below the falls, the amphitheater-like rock formations are stunning and the trail passes through a “rock house,” a dry area protected by the protruding rocks above. The rock house contains huge slabs of sandstone that have cleaved from the parent rocks and which are piled in a “breakdown room.” This hike is easy to moderate and should take only two hours. Wear sturdy boots for climbing along the rocks and bring drinking water.